

Alexandria, VA 22304
04 January 1985

Dear Mom and Dad,

I was glad to talk to you on New Year's day. Your letter arrived today. Please don't try to remember all the "important" dates; it's just too difficult as the years go by. I hope your snow is gone; the paper indicates it has warmed up a little bit in Seattle. The weather is a little cooler here. Yesterday we had some sleet which left the trees coated with ice but nothing on the ground since it has been so warm. It is above freezing tonight and the weekend is expected to be sunny and warmer.

I'm just not suited to being a landlord. There is nothing that sounds worse than having to spend a weekend cleaning up someone else's mess. Sometimes we talk about moving down to Old Town, but then I think of all the work and trouble and forget about it. I hope Mary doesn't have to spend a lot of time on the rental house.

The Monday before New Year's was a holiday for me but not for Vickie. I went into town and visited the National Gallery of Art. The first exhibit I saw was Drawings from the Albertina Gallery in Vienna. It contained many masterpieces from such artists as Rembrandt, Raphael, and Durer. The second exhibit was of ballet paintings by the French artist Degas. He lived in the middle of the 19th century when people went to the opera as people go to the movies today. Many of his paintings are of the performers and patrons of the Paris opera. The cassette recording which one can rent helped me to understand something about his technique and objectives. The more I see of art the better I can appreciate it and it is a pleasant change from my every day work.

On New Year's we went to the race and had a party afterward as I told you on the phone. Then it was back to work on Wednesday but things have been pretty quiet as many people apparently took the rest of the week off. Before leaving the Underground this evening I bought a loaf of bread at the bakery and some swordfish steaks at Larimer's. We had a very good dinner. Looking at my calendar, I see it was a year ago you arrived here to help out Mary while she attended class. Last year certainly passed in a hurry. I ran 1765 miles which is 65 miles short of my goal of 5 miles per day. But I'm not disappointed! There is a race on Sunday at American University. I remember driving you around the course when we visited Clara Barton's house. It is five laps for a total of 25 kilometers or a little over 15 miles. If the weather is good I may try it again, although I can tell Vickie is not at all interested! I hope you are getting along well and I will write again soon. We appreciate your letters.

Love,

Jim & Vickie